

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. Claims 1-9 and 12-16 are now pending in this application.

Independent Claims 1 and 13 are amended.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments, see Page 10, lines 2-3 of Applicant's Remarks filed 7/07/2008, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1 and 13, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) have been fully considered but are not persuasive.

3. Regarding Applicant's Argument:

"It fails to teach or suggest printing a plurality of images superposed on the payment transaction print data by dividing the receipt into segments"

Examiner's Response:

The Examiner's main reference Goring discloses a receipt on which the image data are printed in an appropriate region in accordance with the length of the receipt (The system may be configured to require that the service provider specifies the image 600 and its location (e.g. header, footer, margin, specific box, etc.) as described in [0020]), thereby printing the plurality of images in a manner superposed on the payment transaction information by dividing the receipt into further segments. This embodiment of Goring divides the receipt into segments such as header, footer, margin, specific box, etc., and does not specify that the image has to

be on a certain line as in the other embodiment. That is to say, Goring discloses that this option of placing the image in e.g., the footer is not dependent on the length of the cash register receipt. The Examiner thanks the applicant for pointing out in their specification where this embodiment of 'dividing the receipt into segments' is detailed, but respectfully disagrees that the Goring reference fails to disclose this feature.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-9, and 12-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goring (US 2002/0077892) in view of Okamoto (US 4,985,850) and further in view of Ito (US 4,584,573).

Regarding Claim 1: (Currently Amended)

Goring discloses a method of controlling a printing apparatus having stored therein in advance predetermined image data so as to correspond to payment transaction print data (A method of printing a receipt which includes a printed image. [0009], lines 1-2) generated based on input information concerning merchandise sales (The method includes

downloading transaction information, retrieving an image associated with the transaction information, converting the image into a pixel matrix representation, and printing at least one scan line. The scan line is printed by selectively printing pixels corresponding to the pixel matrix representation. [0009], lines 2-3), **the printing apparatus** being arranged to print the predetermined image data on a receipt by adding the image data upon receiving the payment transaction print data by the printing apparatus, said method comprising the steps of:

obtaining the payment transaction print data (After a consumer selects one of the supported services and performs a financial transaction (e.g. a purchase, a bank withdrawal, paying a bill on-line, etc.), the kiosk 300 processes the financial transaction, sends the results to the service provider and receives the receipt details. The kiosk 300 then produces a receipt with the included graphic (e.g. the merchants logo may be printed at the top of each receipt). [0018], lines 1-6);

retrieving a predetermined character string (The kiosk 300 then produces a receipt with the included graphic (e.g. the merchants logo may be printed at the top of each receipt). If the receipt is a Token receipt (one in which the format is fixed), the kiosk 300 receives the Token receipt details and prints a fixed graphic in a preassigned location on the Token receipt. There is no need to specify the graphic since the file name and placement should already be known by the kiosk 300. However, the system may be configured to require that the service provider specifies the graphic and its location (e.g. header, footer, margin, specific box, etc.). This could be done for redundancy purposes (in which case the kiosk 300 could either print the graphic based on the stored information or based on the received information depending on the design choice) or it could be done to allow services, which are not specific to the kiosk 300 to utilize the graphical receipt capabilities. [0018], lines 10-12) indicative of a print position of the image data to be printed on the receipt from the payment transaction print data;

(Note: It is inherent that character information in a code format, e.g., a character string which has been transmitted/retrieved from an external apparatus such as a host computer or the like and is received by a data input unit, for instance, an interface, is

converted into dot information in a bit image format. Such a procedure is well known in the art.)

adding the image data to the payment transaction print data (FIG. 2 illustrates a coupon/receipt printed with a fixed graphic based on the obtained location ([0019]) **so as to print the image data with a position specified by location serving as a reference** (The system may be configured to require that the service provider specifies the graphic and its location (e.g. header, footer, margin, specific box, etc.). [0018], lines 6-9) to obtain, a synthesized print result; and

printing the image data by dividing the receipt into segments (The system may be configured to require that the service provider specifies the image 600 and its location (e.g. header, footer, margin, specific box, etc.) as described in [0020]).

Goring does not disclose expressly wherein the printing apparatus stores in advance predetermined image data based on input information and a printing apparatus being arranged to print the predetermined image data by adding the image data upon receipt of the print data by the printing apparatus; and

obtaining a line number specified by the retrieved predetermined character string;

Okamoto discloses wherein the printing apparatus stores in advance predetermined image data (e.g., RAM's 102a and 102b in Figure 7) based on input information (Column 3, lines 36-44) and a printing apparatus being arranged to print the predetermined image data by adding the image data upon receipt (e.g., Figures 8A-8D show how contents of the respective RAM's are combined) of the print data by the printing apparatus; and

obtaining a line number specified by the retrieved predetermined character string (Column 5, lines 23-28);

Goring & Okamoto are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor, image processing; e.g., printing and configuring image data.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have a printing apparatus that stores in advance predetermined image data based on input information and a printing apparatus that is arranged to print the predetermined image data by adding the image data upon receipt of the print data by the printing apparatus.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so is to have a printing system which has the ability to produce customized information, wherein a customized image is merged with other standardized information and printed or displayed is a desirable feature when producing any kind of document. This allows the user to determine the exact appearance of a document.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Okamoto's method of storing and combining print information with Goring's method of printing a receipt to obtain the invention as specified in claim 1.

Goring and Okamoto do not disclose expressly printing the image data so that the image data is superposed on the payment transaction print data.

Ito discloses printing the image data so that the image data is superimposed on the print data (Referring to Figure 11; The background pattern and the character pattern are **superimposed on**

each other, and the output signal of the AND gate 38 is applied to the OR gate 16 where the background pattern data is combined with the character pattern data, and the composite signal is applied to the dot matrix printer 12 as described in Column 5, lines 31-52).

Ito, Goring and Okamoto are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing; e.g., all references combine separate sources of data to attain a composite image.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to print the image data so that the image data is superimposed on the print data.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would be to provide a system which can control the printing of e.g., a background pattern or graphic combined with a character pattern. It is desirable to combine graphics and text in a variety of ways to create an appealing and effective document for e.g., a presentation or report.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Ito with Goring & Okamoto to obtain the invention as specified in Claim 1.

Regarding Claim 2: (Original)

Goring further discloses a method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

generating an image addition setting command based on the obtained location ([0020]); and

transmitting the payment transaction print data and the image addition setting command to the printing apparatus ([0022]);

wherein the printing apparatus adds the image data to the payment transaction print data based on a result of analysis of the image addition setting command ([0019]).

Regarding Claim 3: (Original)

Goring further discloses a method according to claim 2, wherein the predetermined character string is a start character string indicative of a position to start addition of the image data ([0020]); and

wherein, in the step of obtaining the location, a location specified by the start character string is obtained ([0018], lines 14-22).

Regarding Claim 4: (Original)

Goring further discloses a method according to claim 2, wherein the predetermined character string is made up of a start character string indicative of a position to start addition of the image data, and an end character string indicative of a position to end addition of the image data ([0021]);

wherein, in the step of obtaining the location, a plurality of location to be specified by the start character string and by the end character string are obtained ([0021]).

Regarding Claim 5: (Original)

Goring further discloses a method according to claim 4, wherein the printing apparatus has stored therein a plurality of image data files which are files of the image data ([0014]). the method further comprising the steps of:

storing (See Image Database 200 in Figure 1) a definition table (“Other storage structures may be employed, such as a linking **table**”) in which the start character string and the end character string are correlated with image designation data for designating an image data file out of a plurality of image data files stored in the printing apparatus (“Once the image information is stored, either **locally** or through a Universal Resource Locator (URL) also known as an Internet address, an image database 200 may be established”; and obtaining, from the definition table, image designation data which are related to the extracted start character string and the end character string, wherein, in the step of generating the image addition setting command, the image addition setting command is generated on the basis of the obtained location and the image designation data ([0017]).

Regarding Claim 6: (Original)

Goring further discloses a method according to claim 4, further comprising the step of setting at least one of the start character string and the end character string ([0021]).

Regarding Claim 7: (Original)

Goring further discloses a method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of setting image designation data in which the image designation data are set in correlation with at least one of the start character string and the end character string to be set in the step of setting the character string ([0018], lines 14-22);

Regarding Claim 8: (Original)

Goring further discloses a method according to claim 4, further comprising the step of setting the location in which, in the step of obtaining the location, setting is made as to which is obtained between the location in the start character string and the location which is one line below the start character string, and setting is made as to which is obtained between the location in the end character string and the location which is one line above the end character string ([0018], lines 14-22);

Regarding Claim 9: (Original)

Goring discloses all the limitations of Claim 2; however

Goring does not disclose expressly wherein the printing apparatus is capable of performing color printing, the method further comprising the step of setting a printing color of the image data, wherein the image addition setting command includes a parameter showing the printing color.

Okamoto discloses wherein the printing apparatus is capable of performing color printing (Column 2, lines 54-57; See Figure 1), the method further comprising the step of setting a printing color of the image data (e.g., Colors stored in RAM a and RAM b described on Column 2, lines 58-68), wherein the image addition setting command includes a parameter showing the printing color (Column 3, lines 39-44).

Goring & Okamoto are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor, image processing; e.g., printing and configuring image data.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have a printing apparatus and setting command capable of color printing.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would be to enhance the clarity and display of the text and images. Some customers prefer to see ads in color, and colors may compel people to read ads and take note of the advertisement.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Okamoto's color printer with Goring's method of printing a receipt to obtain the invention as specified in claim 9.

Regarding Claim 10:

Cancelled

Regarding Claim 11:

Cancelled

Regarding Claim 12: (Original)

Goring teaches a printer driver for enabling a computer to execute the steps of the method of controlling a printing apparatus according to Claim 1.

Note: A device driver is an **inherent feature** that allows a computer to control printers, displays, disk drives, CD-ROM readers and so on in order to convert the more general input/output instructions of the operating system to messages that the device type can understand.

Regarding Claim 13: (Currently Amended)

Claim 13 an apparatus claim is rejected for the same reason(s) as method Claim 1.

Regarding Claim 14: (Original)

Goring discloses all the limitations of Claim 2; however

Goring does not disclose expressly wherein the printing apparatus is capable of performing color printing, the method further comprising the step of setting a printing color of the image data, wherein the image addition setting command includes a parameter showing the printing color.

Okamoto discloses wherein the printing apparatus is capable of performing color printing (Column 2, lines 54-57; See Figure 1), the method further comprising the step of setting a printing color of the image data (e.g., Colors stored in RAM a and RAM b described on Column 2, lines 58-68), wherein the image addition setting command includes a parameter showing the printing color (Column 3, lines 39-44).

Goring & Okamoto are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor, image processing; e.g., printing and configuring image data. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have a printing apparatus and setting command capable of color printing. The suggestion/motivation for doing so would be to enhance the clarity and display of the

text and images. Some customers prefer to see ads in color, and colors may compel people to read ads and take note of the advertisement.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Okamoto's color printer with Goring's method of printing a receipt to obtain the invention as specified in claim 14.

Regarding Claim 15: (Original)

Goring teaches a merchandise sales data processing apparatus having the printing apparatus according to Claim 13; and

a host computer which controls the printing apparatus ([0026]) by transmitting the payment transaction print data and the image addition setting command to the printing apparatus, wherein the host computer comprises:

means for generating the payment transaction print data ([0026]);

means for retrieving a predetermined character string indicative of a print position of the image data to be printed from the payment transaction print data string (The program code or device which performs the function described in [0018]);

means for obtaining the location specified by the extracted predetermined character string (The program code or device which performs the function described in [0018]);

means for generating the image addition setting command based on the obtained location (The program code or device which performs the function described in [0020]); and

means for transmitting the payment transaction print data and the image addition setting command to the printing apparatus (The program code or device which performs the function described in [0018].

Regarding Claim 16: (Original)

Goring teaches a POS system comprising:
the merchandise sales data processing apparatus according to claim 15; and
a POS server ([0026], lines 1) for managing the merchandise sales data processing apparatus, the POS server being connected to the merchandise sales data processing apparatus through a network (service provider described in [0026]).

Regarding Claim 17:

Cancelled

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Parks et al. (US 5,025,396) teaches a method of merging an alphanumeric data stream with a digitized image file.

Examiner Notes

8. The Examiner cites particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified

citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that, in preparing responses, the applicant fully considers the references in its entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or as disclosed by the Examiner.

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Neil R. McLean whose telephone number is (571)270-1679. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 7:30AM-4:00PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David K. Moore can be reached on 571.272.7437. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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